

OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AFFAIRS (ORBA) WEEKLY REPORT: November 22 – 29, 2017

ISSUES OF NOTE

DRINKING WATER LABORATORY AUDIT TAKES PLACE IN AFRICA:

- From November 13-17, members of the USEPA West Africa Laboratory Capacity Building team from ORD/Cincinnati provided mentoring and technical input into a drinking water laboratory exploratory audit in Abuja, Nigeria with an auditing team consisting of staff from Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) and the African Water Association (AfWA).
- The aim of the exploration audit was to make a short assessment of the mentee lab's performance level and to identify what improvements might be needed from a political, strategic, institutional, organizational, legal, technical and financial point of view in order to identify priority issues and areas for improvement in the laboratory and to identify and suggest types of support to be provided by GWCL to the mentee in defining priority projects for improved water quality management.
- Implemented in six countries in West Africa, the long-term goal of the overall AfWA Auditing program is to promote the capacity building of water analysis laboratories through peer to peer partnerships. AfWA member mentor utilities comprising GWCL for Anglophone countries and Burkina Faso's National Office of Water and Sanitation (ONEA) for Francophone countries, will each choose one lab to form a peer-peer partnership with in order to implement a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) over a three-year period.
- EPA experts were also able to meet with the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) to discuss furthering results of the program [Kuklinski].

CEC ANNOUNCES 2017-2018 NORTH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY ACTION (NAPECA) GRANTEES:

- The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Council chose nine projects to receive grants through its NAPECA program, which seeks to empower and build the capacity of local and Indigenous communities at the grassroots level to improve the

health and environmental quality in their communities and to create a sense of shared responsibility and stewardship for their environment.

- An unprecedented number, five of the nine projects selected for implementation, examine environmental issues from a traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) perspective, focusing on partnerships and collaboration with Indigenous knowledge holders, enhanced community-based observations, and fostering the integral contributions of Indigenous knowledge as model environmental initiatives.
- The five TEK-related projects range from supporting production capacity in Mayan forests in Mexico, to Indigenous-led land use planning projects in Canada to preserving traditional knowledge of First Foods and medicines in the United States, among other activities.
- All activities advance environmentally responsible economic development while decreasing pressure on natural resources and all also ultimately emphasize the role of local and/or Indigenous communities using TEK to respond to and manage processes and functions related to ecosystems, natural resources and ecological diversity.
- ORBA will continue to work closely with Canada, Mexico and our TEK Roster of Experts to ensure successful results in these important activities. [Correa]

PLANNING FOR COMMISSION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION (CEC) COUNCIL SESSION 2018:

- Under Administrator Pruitt's chairmanship, the Council Session 2018 is scheduled for June 26-27 In Oklahoma City
- The theme for the Council Session is "Innovation and Partnerships for Green Growth"
- ORBA and the Administrator's team are working with experts and hosts in Oklahoma and designing key events
- The Council approved this week 9 NAPECA initiatives engaging communities in innovation and partnerships for green growth (<http://www.cec.org/our-work/napeca>)
- Building on the success of 2017, the Council approved a second Youth Innovation Challenge seeking proposals on innovation and partnerships for green growth
- The CEC Secretariat is visiting Oklahoma Dec 4-5 to select venues and initiate preparations for the Council Session. [Troche]

BRAZIL IBAMA STUDY TOUR VISIT:

- A ten-member delegation from the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), EPA's counterpart agency, visited EPA headquarters for a half day of briefings and discussions on environmental impact assessment (EIA) approaches, environmental licensing, emergency response and stakeholder engagement in which OECA, OW and OLEM took part. They were also joined by an environmental lawyer from Sao Paolo.
- The IBAMA participants, based in the Rio de Janeiro regional office, were very engaged in the topics of focus, particularly from the perspective of managing offshore oil and gas

development. At EPA/OITA's request, IBAMA provided an update on competing proposed bills before Congress to amend procedures around environmental licensing over which the debate continues. IBAMA delegation was enthusiastic about the posting of EPA Region 8 chemicals expert, Stephen Ramirez, to IBAMA's headquarters in Brasilia under the State Department Embassy Science Fellows Program which will occur from Jan-April 2018.

- The delegation indicated they are interested in a long-distance exchange as questions arise on the areas discussed. The group will be also visit EPA's Region 8 Office during their trip to Denver. [Mercurio]

JOINT SENATOR TESTER AND MONTANA GOVERNOR LETTER TO STATE DEPT:

- Senator Jon Tester and Montana Governor Steve Bullock have sent a joint letter to the U.S. Department of State (DOS) requesting the agency's involvement to address bilateral water quality concerns in the Kootenai River watershed.
- Contamination from British Columbia's coal extraction facilities is threatening the water quality in the binational Lake Koocanusa and downstream drinking water sources in the Kootenai River, which traverses Montana and Idaho before flowing back into B.C. Tribes and other citizens on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border are impacted by the increasing degradation of these waters.
- The letter further notes the importance of a joint bilateral site-specific selenium standard for Lake Koocanusa as critical to preserving the water quality in the watershed and requests that DOS identify federal resources, including EPA and other USG agencies, to support long-term fish tissue and water quality monitoring in the Kootenai River watershed in Montana and Idaho. [Teel]

PLANNING FOR COMMISSION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION (CEC) COUNCIL SESSION 2018:

- Under Administrator Pruitt's chairmanship, the Council Session 2018 is scheduled for June 26-27 In Oklahoma City
- The theme for the Council Session is "Innovation and Partnerships for Green Growth"
- ORBA and the Administrator's team are working with experts and hosts in Oklahoma and designing key events
- The Council approved this week 9 NAPECA initiatives engaging communities in innovation and partnerships for green growth (<http://www.cec.org/our-work/napeca>)
- Building on the success of 2017, the Council approved a second Youth Innovation Challenge seeking proposals on innovation and partnerships for green growth
- The CEC Secretariat is visiting Oklahoma Dec 4-5 to select venues and initiate preparations for the Council Session. [TROCHE]

EPA FOLLOW UP DISCUSSIONS WITH TAIWAN:

- Following up on the visit of Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator Jane Nishida to Taipei, further discussions were held with Environmental Protection Administration Taiwan (EPAT) and other stakeholders to secure budgets and begin the 2018 program planning process for the International Environmental Partnership.
- Taichung, Taiwan's second largest city, reaffirmed its commitment to provide space and resources for environmental education programming under the Global Environmental Education Partnership program. Taichung is envisioned to be a future hub for environmental education in the Asia-Pacific region based out of its new International NGO park.
- Environmental Protection Administration Taiwan will begin high-level discussion this week to explore potential funding commitments for Taiwan's new environmental education hub.
- Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MOE) also began detailed discussions about how it will support key environmental education programming including the US-Taiwan Eco-Campus partnership program which mirrors the global Foundation for Environmental Education Eco-Schools program.
- MOE suggested that funds will be set aside to support student and educator exchanges. OITA also initiated planning and budget discussions for the 2018 program including EPAT's new air quality platform, International E-waste Management Network, and Asia-Pacific Mercury Monitoring Network. [Guen-Murray, Novikoff, Harris]

LOOKING FORWARD

EPA COLLABORATION WITH MOROCCO TO DEVELOP SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS:

- OITA, Region 2, Region 3, and the Department of State are working with the Morocco Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water, and Environment and the Ministry of Interior to develop Principles of Solid Waste Management and Crisis Communication workshops that will be led by EPA facilitators.
- The workshops are planned to take place consecutively during the week of December 4 - 8th in Rabat, Morocco. [Landis, Kandil, Hill-Macon]

OFFICE OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS AND POLICY
November 30, 2017



Trash Free Waters Workshop in Panama

OITA and EPA's Puerto Rico office held a two-day Trash Free Waters workshop in Panama in partnership with Panama's Ministry of Environment and UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC). Over 30 stakeholders from Panama attended the workshop that presented EPA's Trash Free Waters approach and shared examples of projects in the US, Jamaica and Peru, along with technologies from around the world that can be used to address marine litter. Stakeholders included ministries of environment and tourism, universities, NGOs, the Panama Canal Authority, the office of the mayor of Panama City, UNDP and the US Embassy. By the end of the workshop, participants had developed ideas for four projects to reduce marine litter and will submit full proposals to the Ministry of Environment, UNEP and EPA for review and selection. EPA is contributing financially toward a pilot project to be completed by the end of September 2018. This work helps fulfill EPA's commitment toward reducing marine litter in the Caribbean under the Land Based Sources Protocol. [Adrian, Horan]

FFAR Food Waste Research Agenda

OGAP participated in an event by the Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research (FFAR) on "Food Waste to Food Security and Beyond: Identifying Research Gaps Across the Food System." The event brought together a broad mix of experts active in the food waste reduction arena, from the private, public, non-profit sectors and academia, to assist FFAR in developing their research agenda to promote innovative and actionable science related to food waste. FFAR is a 501(c)(3) established by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill with a budget of \$200 million. [MacDonald]

UN Environment Assembly Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives Meeting

EPA participated in the Open Ended CPR meeting for the third United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3), which begins next week at UN Environment Programme Headquarters in Nairobi. OITA and OGC are part of the U.S. delegation, which is led by the Department of State and also includes NOAA. EPA is leading and/or assisting in negotiations on lead paint, marine litter, water, biodiversity, and soil pollution. EPA succeeded in getting Africa region co-sponsorship of the draft lead resolution, which now includes language on lead acid batteries. [Smith, Finman, Epp, Besch, Rourk]

Mexico Emission Control Area (ECA) Update

OITA represented EPA and the USG in a trilateral steering committee meeting for the CEC project to support Mexico in establishing a maritime Emission Control Area (ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI. The CEC's project contractor is updating and refining the draft Mexico ECA designation proposal in line with recommendations from EPA and Canadian members of the steering committee. Also, the steering committee provided input to the Port of Los Angeles for the latter's preparations to host the next conference of the Pacific Ports Clean Air Collaborative in March 2018. The first day of the conference agenda will focus heavily on the benefits of establishing ECAs in terms of improving national and local air quality, and efforts to improve compliance with ECA provisions. A representative from Mexico's environment ministry will give a presentation on the status of Mexico's work to establish an ECA, and Chinese representatives will speak about the results from the three areas they have established to date. [Muehling, Bandemehr, Troche]

EPA Briefing for Chinese Maritime Delegation

Staff from OITA (utilizing input from OAR) and EPA Region 2 briefed a delegation of 15 Chinese government and maritime industry officials on the importance of the North American Emission Control Area to our efforts to improve national and local air quality. EPA also briefed the group on recent national assessment of the use of shore power to reduce diesel emissions from ships in ports, and Region 2's work with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. [Muehling, Novikoff]

World Bank Guidance Notes out for Review

The World Bank has recently released their draft Guidance Notes which are meant to inform the implementation of their new safeguards, The Environmental and Social Standards (ESS). The ESSs are the main component of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) which is the overarching policy and strategy of the Bank to assess and mitigate environmental and social impacts. Treasury is leading the interagency effort to review the guidance notes and is seeking input from State Department, USAID, Department of Labor, and EPA among others. OITA is reviewing the Guidance Notes language and seeking input from EPA programs with a view towards insuring that Bank projects under the new ESF are not detrimental to the environment or human health. Final comments from Treasury will be submitted to the Bank for review on December 15th. [Ferrante, Ziegler, Harrington]

OITA Organizes and Facilitates First Regional EPIC Training in Southern Africa

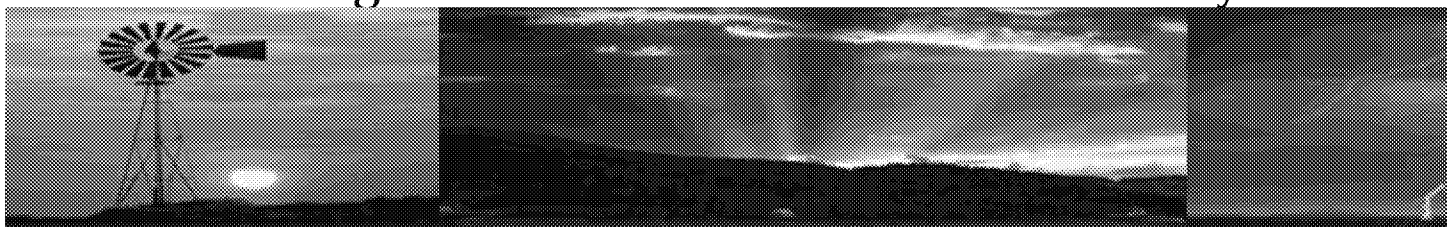
On November 18th and 19th OITA, the UN Global Adaptation Network, the International City/County Management Association, the EPIC Network, Africa Local Governments for Sustainability, and the US National Science Foundation hosted a 2-day regional training in Cape Town, South Africa for city and university officials from South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ghana. The training was based on the EPIC (Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities) model partnership between local universities and local governments that aims to build local government capacity to address issues of resilience and sustainability by drawing upon the expertise of universities. With support from the UN Global Adaptation Network and the National Science Foundation, OITA and its partners were able to select 13 pairs of applicants (local government and university officials) from the

countries cited above to participate in the 2-day training. The workshop resulted in the creation of a regional EPIC Africa network to further the progress made in the workshop. [Socci, Besch].

CEC Food Waste Projects

EPA has provided the Quality Assurance Review of the concluded CEC research project on “Characterization and Management of Food Waste in North America.” The newly constituted Steering Committee for the CEC food waste follow up project on “Measurement and Mitigation of Food Waste in North America” has just completed negotiation on the terms of reference for the proposed contract to support the Measurement component of the project. OITA also convened a meeting of EPA staff (from OITA, OLEM and Region 10) supporting the Youth Education and Outreach on food waste reduction project component to further develop the key objectives and deliverables for this work, including exploring opportunities to integrate consideration of education and outreach related to tribal communities. [MacDonald, Lieberman]

Office of Management & International Services Weekly



Evidence and Evaluation (E&E) Community of Practice: OMIS attended OCFO's inaugural meeting to discuss and develop common understanding of evidence and evaluation, and the importance and use in EPA's planning, budgeting and accountability processes. There's an increased focus on E&E across the Agency, for example, Lean Program Management calls for programs to create data and use evidence to show improvement. In addition, the House, in Bill, HR 4174 envisions [that] each agency develops a 4-year plan on how to gather and use evidence to facilitate program improvement

- a) Requirement. — Not later than the first Monday in February of each year, the head of each agency shall submit to the Director and Congress a systematic plan for identifying and addressing policy questions relevant to the programs, policies, and regulations of the agency. Such plan shall be made available on the public website of the agency and shall cover at least a 4-year period beginning with the first fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the plan is submitted and published

International Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines (IMEG): OMIS hosted the second IMEG Workgroup concerning the implementation of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016. Section 3 requires monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the performance of United States foreign assistance and its contribution to the policies, strategies, projects, program goals and priorities undertaken by the Federal Government. The President to set forth guidelines according to best practices of monitoring and evaluation. The goal of these guidelines is to set forth key principles to guide each agency and to specify requirements where appropriate that agencies must cover in their own policies on monitoring and evaluation of foreign assistance. (Weckesser)

Grants.gov Workspace Training for Applicants in December: Beginning January 1, 2018 all grant applicants must use Workspace to submit applications through Grants.gov. EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment is hosting a Grants.gov-led webinar session that will provide training and a demonstration on Workspace. **No registration is required.** EPA will be recording the sessions for those who cannot attend and will post them on the training website listed below. See <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grantsgov-workspace-training-grant-applicants-and-recipients> for additional details about the webinar and for the latest information.

- If you wish to attend, just go to the following link a few minutes before the webinar starts: Grants.gov Workspace Training and Demo. There is no call in number – audio will be broadcast through your computer speakers or headphones.

For all grant applicants: Date: Monday December 4, 2017 Time: 2:00 – 3:30 PM EST	For tribal applicants: Date Monday December 11, 2017 Time: 2:00 – 3:30 PM EST
--	---

OITA Mission Metrics: OMIS initiated the December monthly request to populate EPA’s ‘Bowling Chart’ spreadsheet. Following up on Office of Policy’s introduction presentations and as discussed in OITA Office bi-weekly meetings, NPMs are requested to populate the ‘Bowling Chart’. It will be this document that will determine / constitute the monthly management agenda with Chief Operating Officer (COO) Henry Darwin.

Straw Proposal for FY 2019 NPM Guidance: The purpose of NPM Guidances is to provide a national operational framework used by the regions, states, and tribes to implement programmatic activities protective of human health and the environment, consistent with the President’s Budget. Elements of Two-Year NPM Guidance and Addendum Process are

- Earlier and more meaningful state and tribal engagement in joint priority setting.
- Clear and transparent support for flexibility within the NPM Guidances.
- Better alignment of NPM and Grant Guidances.
- Earlier and more meaningful state and tribal engagement in commitment setting.
- Second year Addendum that has a high threshold for exceptions-based changes.

Due to several ongoing timing challenges (e.g., the ongoing budget uncertainty), OCFO circulated a draft proposal for review and comment in preparation for an upcoming NPM Guidance/NEPPS Workgroup Discussion. (Weckesser)



Travel by EPA senior managers

Traveler: Jane Nishida, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, OITA
Destinations: NAIROBI - KENYA
Meeting: Kenya/Morocco Mission
Date: 12/03/2017

Traveler: Richard Yamada, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, ORD
Destinations: TOKYO - JAPAN
Meeting: Meeting with representatives of Japan's Ministry of the Environment
Date: 12/07/2017

Traveler: Scott Pruitt, EPA Administrator
Destinations: Rabat, Marrakech, Morocco
Meeting: The Administrator's visit to Morocco
Date: 12/09/2017